



Home Office

**Border &
Immigration Agency**

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

GUINEA

24 MAY 2007

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1. Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information (COI) Key Documents has been produced by Research, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 24 May 2007.
- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.
- iii For Home Office users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on Guinea is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the key documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional documents are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

Country of Origin Information Service

Home Office
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36 Wellesley Road
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Website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html

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ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- vii The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country of origin information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at www.apci.org.uk.
- viii It is not the function of the Advisory Panel to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. In the course of its work, the Advisory Panel directly reviews the content of selected Home Office COI documents, but neither the fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

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2. Background information about Guinea

Full Country Name: The Republic of Guinea

Area: 245,857 sq. km

Population: 9.2 million (mid-2004 est.)

Capital City: Conakry (population : 1.1 million)

People and languages: The main ethnic groups in Guinea are the Peulh, the Malinke and the Susu (Soussou). The south-eastern forest region is inhabited by the Kissi, Loma and Kpelle peoples. French is the official language. Eight languages are taught in Guinea's schools: Basari, Pular, Kissi, Koniagi, Kpelle, Loma, Malinke and Susu.

Religion(s): Muslim, Christian and traditional beliefs.

Currency: Guinean Franc (GNF)

Major political parties: The main political parties are:

Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès (PUP) (in power)

Union pour le Progrès de la Guinée (UPG);

Union pour le Progrès et le Renouveau (UPR);

Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR);

Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée (RPG).

Head of State: President General Lansana Conté

Prime Minister: Cellou Daliel Diallo

Membership of international groupings/organisations: United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Development Bank (AFDB), Mano River Union (MRU). [1a](Europa Online)

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GEOGRAPHY

"Guinea is situated on the West Coast of Africa. It borders Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The country can broadly be divided into four zones: a narrow coastal belt, north-western hill region, central savannah which is [the] source of the river Niger and the south-eastern rain forest." [4a](FCO country profile, Guinea, 21 February 2007)

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RECENT HISTORY

"Guinea became a French colony in the late nineteenth century. It became independent in October 1958, two years earlier than the other French African colonies, because it rejected de Gaulle's offer of membership of the French Community (a short lived structure which gave France's colonies limited autonomy within the French empire). Guinea was the only country of the French African Empire to reject de Gaulle's proposal, and the country's historic 'Non' led to it being abandoned by the French who immediately cut all ties. This reinforced a proud sense of independent nationhood in Guinea which still resonates today.

"Sekou Touré, who became the first President, ruled as an autocrat and suppressed opposition, often on the pretext of defending the country against destabilisation by foreign powers. Cut off by France, Touré isolated Guinea from Western influence and allied himself with the Soviet bloc. Hundreds of thousands of Guineans went into exile.

"Touré died in 1984, and was succeeded by General Lasana Conté following a bloodless coup. Conté's moves to initiate a more open style of government were

welcomed by the population. However an attempted coup in July 1985 brought the regime's authoritarian instincts to the fore - thousands were arrested and dozens executed. Conté soon reverted to the oppressive methods of the Sekou Touré years.” (FCO country profile, Guinea, 21 February 2007)

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RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

“In 1991 public pressure forced the introduction of a new constitution providing for the introduction of multiparty politics. The new constitution also put a limit of two terms of seven years on the Presidential tenure. The 114-member legislature has a five-year term. However presidential polls were not held until December 1993 and parliamentary elections not until June 1995. They were won by Conté and his Parti d'Unite et de Progres (PUP). The opposition claimed that both the campaigns and the ballots were biased or frauded in favour of the regime. In February 1996 a coup attempt and army mutiny shook the regime and led to the arrest and detention of hundreds of soldiers, 98 of whom were tried and 38 convicted.

“The country's second presidential election was held in December 1998. Conté won 56.1% of the 71.4% turn out, although both figures were contested by the opposition. The key opposition leader, Alpha Conde, was arrested shortly after the elections, and charged with plotting against state security. His trial did not start until May 2000. He was convicted and sentenced to 5 years in prison, but released in May 2001 following a presidential pardon.

“In November 2001 Conté put to referendum a change in the constitution to rescind the two term limit on presidential office. According to the official result 98.4% of voters endorsed the change, on the basis of a 87.2% turnout. This allowed Conté to run for a third term in the December 2003 elections, which he won with 95% of the vote, the main opposition leaders having boycotted the poll. Opposition parties also disputed the validity of the 2002 Parliamentary elections. The opposition regularly claim that the security forces prevent them from carrying out normal political activities. However they agreed to participate in the December 2005 local elections.

“On January 10th 2007 the trade Union movement initiated a general strike to protest at the appalling economic conditions in Guinea. The strike was very widely adhered to across the country. Following a series of written demands made on January 14th, tensions increased. A peaceful march in Conakry on January 17th was violently put down, triggering waves of violence which continue to rock the country. While reliable figures are hard to establish, it is clear that well over a hundred people have lost their lives in the ensuing troubles. The nomination of a Prime Minister (one of the Unions' demands of January 14th) has not calmed the situation as the person nominated (Eugene Camara) is considered to be too close to the President. A curfew and a state of siege have now been declared. The regional organisation ECOWAS is attempting to mediate.” (FCO country profile, Guinea, 21 February 2007)

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ECONOMY

GDP: \$3,870 (2004)

GDP per head: \$421 (2004)

Annual Growth: 2.6% (2004)

Inflation: 15.2% (2004)

Major Industries: Minerals (bauxite; iron ore)

Major trading partners: Exports: South Korea, European Union, Russia, United States, Cameroon. Imports: European Union, Cote d'Ivoire, China.

Exchange rate: £1 = 9,993 GNF (July 2006); [4a] 11,768 Guinean Franc = 1 Pound Sterling (23 March 2007)

[4a] (FCO country profile, Guinea, 21 February 2007)

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HUMAN RIGHTS

The US State Department report for 2006, published 6 March 2007, summarises the human rights record of Guinea's Government as follows:

"The government continued to implement political and macroeconomic reforms begun in 2004, but serious human rights abuses occurred during the year. There were restrictions on the right of citizens to change their government. Security forces unlawfully killed, beat, and abused civilians, particularly detainees. Prison conditions were inhumane and life-threatening. Impunity of alleged perpetrators of killings and abuse remained a problem. There were arbitrary arrests, prolonged pretrial detention, and incommunicado detention. The judiciary was subject to corruption and executive influence. The government infringed on citizens' privacy rights and restricted freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, and freedom of movement. Violence and societal discrimination against women, prostitution of young girls, and female genital mutilation (FGM) were problems. Progress was made in combating trafficking of persons, but the practice continued, as did ethnic discrimination, antiunion discrimination, and child labor.

"The government took significant steps to improve freedom of the press by implementing a 2005 media liberalization decree and granting broadcast licenses to eight private radio stations. The government agreed to some electoral reforms proposed by political parties." [2a]

The FCO country profile for Guinea, updated 21 February 2007 adds:

"Guinea's human rights record is poor, and always has been. During the regime of Sekou Touré, many people were tortured in prison or executed after show trials. Those responsible have yet to face justice. Under President Conte, human rights abuses continue, although the situation is far better than under Sekou Touré's regime. Petty corruption by the security forces and detention without trial are the main concerns. During the fighting in south-eastern Guinea in 2001 against rebels forces from Liberia and Sierra Leone, there were numerous credible reports of human rights abuses by the security forces. Although there is a growing independent print media, journalists are often arrested after writing stories critical of the regime. Until July 2006, all broadcast media are [sic] state owned. A private radio station has now started broadcasting." [4a]

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3. Index to key source documents

(KB users - click source number to access document directly)

KEY FACTS AND GEOGRAPHY	[1a]	Europa World Online, Location, climate, language, religion, flag, capital (accessed on 28 February 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[1a]	Europa World Online, Country statistics (accessed on 28 February 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2006: Guinea, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78738.htm
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Guinea, last updated April 2007 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2824.htm
	[4a]	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Country Profile: Guinea, last updated 21 February 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrypProfile&aid=1019744949880
	[7a]	BBC, Country Profile: Guinea, Last updated 14 February 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1032311.stm
	[10a]	Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook : The World Factbook, Guinea, Last updated 8 February 2007 https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gv.html
MAP	[17]	United Nations Cartographic Section, Map of Guinea. http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/guinea.pdf
HISTORY	[1a]	Europa World Online, Recent history (accessed on 28 February 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2006: Guinea, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78738.htm
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Guinea, last updated April 2007 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2824.htm
	[4a]	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Country Profile: Guinea, last updated 21 February 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrypProfile&aid=1019744949880

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	[7b]	BBC Timeline: Guinea, last updated 13 February 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1032515.stm
	[21a]	Freedom House Freedom in the World 2006: Guinea http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=6973
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	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2005: Guinea, 8 March 2006 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61609.htm
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Guinea, last updated April 2007 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2824.htm
	[4a]	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Country Profile: Guinea, last updated 21 February 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1019744949880
	[5a]	Human Rights Watch (HRW), World Report 2007: Guinea http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/guinea14693.htm
	[7a]	BBC Country Profile: Guinea, last updated 14 February 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1032311.stm
	[7b]	BBC Timeline: Guinea, last updated 13 February 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1032515.stm
	[11a]	Amnesty International (AI) Annual Human Rights report 2006: Guinea, Covering events from January to December 2005 http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/gin-summary-eng
	[16a]	International Crisis Group Guinea in transition 11 April 2006 http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/africa/west_africa/b037_guinea_in_transition.pdf
	[21a]	Freedom House Freedom in the World 2006: Guinea http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=6973

POLITICS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONT...	[22a]	International Herald Tribune, Martial law brings some calm to Guinea's capital along with charges of abuse by military, 12 February 2007 http://www.ihf.com/bin/print.php?id=4574227
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	[3a]	The 1990 Constitution of the Republic of Guinea (in French) http://droit.francophonie.org/doc/html/gn/con/fr/1990/1990dfgncofr1.html
	[4a]	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Country Profile: Guinea, last updated 21 February 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrypProfile&aid=1019744949880
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	[11a]	Amnesty International (AI) report 2006: Guinea, covering events from January to December 2005 http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/idn-summary-eng
	[21a]	Freedom House Freedom in the World 2006: Guinea http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=6973
HUMAN RIGHTS – SPECIFIC ISSUES: (IN ADDITION TO GENERAL REPORTS ABOVE, INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IS PROVIDED IN THE DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW)		
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	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2006: Guinea, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78738.htm
	[2d]	United States Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report, 5 June 2006 http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65988.htm
	[5a]	Human Rights Watch (HRW), World Report 2007: Guinea http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/guinea14693.htm
	[8c]	Canadian IRB-CISR 30 August 2005, GIN100489.FE, Guinea: The Guinean act and/or certificate of birth, the issuing authority, when the act and/or certificate is issued, the information it contains, and

FREEDOM OF RELIGION CONT...	<p>[2a]</p> <p>[2b]</p> <p>[5a]</p> <p>[8f]</p> <p>[21a]</p>	<p>United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2006: Guinea, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78738.htm</p> <p>United States Department of State, International Religious Freedom Report 2006 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71305.htm</p> <p>Human Rights Watch (HRW), World Report 2007: Guinea http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/guinea14693.htm</p> <p>Canadian IRB-CISR 27 May 2005, GIN100074.FE Guinea: Treatment of Christians, specifically how Muslims and Guinean society as a whole treat Muslims who convert to Christianity; available state protection (May 2005) http://www.cisr-irb.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=449384</p> <p>Freedom House Freedom in the World 2006: Guinea http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=6973</p>
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	[21a]	Freedom House Freedom in the World 2006: Guinea http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=6973
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	[8i]	Canadian IRB-CISR 27 January 2005, GIN43302.FE Guinea: Update to GIN38597.F of 8 March 2002 on the Union of Republican Forces (Union des forces républicaines, UFR), including the treatment of its members by government authorities (2002-January 2005) http://www.cisr-irb.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=422621
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